



Health and Welfare
Canada

Santé et Bien-être social
Canada

Health Protection
Branch

Direction générale de la
protection de la santé

Bureau of Chemical Safety
Food Directorate
4th Floor East
Banting Building
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0L2

April 15, 1994

Quebec

Dear Ms. :

This is further to the letter of January 18, 1994, to you from The Honourable Ms. Diane Marleau, Minister of Health Canada. We have reviewed the documents that you submitted to the Minister and would offer the following additional comments.

We understand and appreciate your concern regarding sensitivity to chemicals in the environment, as described in the editorial articles and various other supporting documentation.

Although most humans will not be affected adversely by the chemicals in their environment, individual susceptibility to a chemical(s) is generally recognized as a potential phenomenon. This possibility is well documented by the intolerance of susceptible individuals to foods, food components, drugs and environmental chemicals including pesticides. Such idiosyncratic physiological responses are certainly of concern. However, phenomena such as multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) has not been classified as a disease or syndrome under the latest edition (9th) of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9, WHO, 1977). Various hypotheses have been proposed to explain the cause of MCS. However, many of the new diagnostic tests and treatments employed by certain medical practitioners have not been proven by controlled clinical studies, and thus have not been endorsed, generally, by the medical authorities.

We appreciate the information that you have provided and remain sympathetic to your concerns regarding multiple chemical sensitivities. We would like to conclude by reiterating that Health Canada takes every possible step to protect the health of the Canadian population exposed to chemicals used in Canada.

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I trust that the above information will be of interest to you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "B.L. Huston", with a stylized flourish at the end.

B.L. Huston Ph.D.
Chief
Chemical Evaluation Division